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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: VISITING EAP/MTS OFFICE DIRECTOR URGES PHILIPPINES TO MAKE
PROGRESS ON UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

REF: MANILA 777 AND PREVIOUS

11. (SBU) Summary. EAP/MTS Office Director Marciel highlighted need for progress on solving and stopping unlawful killings in a series of meetings with Philippine officials during the week of February 126. He also expressed the USG's appreciation for success in counterterrorism efforts and on defense reform. This was yet another useful opportunity to convey our concerns on this critical issue. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Marciel and Pol/C met on February 28 with the Philippine National Police (PNP) PC Superintendent Geary Barias, newly appointed head of Task Force Usig. He and his staff presented an update on TF Usig's investigations of "unexplained" killings. According to PNP records, there have been 114 killings of party list members and "militants" since 2001. Of these, fifty cases have been filed, with nine arrested suspects, one surrendered suspect, and 27 "at large" suspects. At least 11 cases have alleged links to the military, with six cases filed, while 29 cases have links to the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army. Sixty-four cases remain under investigation. Of the 26 cases involving killings of journalists, PNP has filed charges in 21 cases, while five remain under investigation. Of two cases involving military elements, charges have been filed in both, with one arrest. Of three cases involving police personnel, charges have been filed in each, with two arrests and four convictions. Of four cases involving local government officials, charges have been filed in each, with four surrendered suspects. Marciel urged prompt justice in all cases, and warned that failure to bring the culprits to justice could be detrimental to U.S.-Philippine relations despite positive progress in other areas. Barias pledged that the PNP would do all in its power, but cited resource constraints and a lack of forensic equipment, modern databases, and police subpoena powers. Barias said he would seek to expand the TF's mandate and oversight and to improve communication about what TF Usig is accomplishing.

13. (SBU) On March 1, Marciel met at Philippine Department of National Defense (DND) headquarters with Assistant Secretaries Roberto Nuqui and Joji Aragon, joined by the JUSMAG chief and Deputy Pol/C. Marciel noted that the USG was pleased with progress in defense reform (PDR) and in neutralizing Abu Sayyaf. Nuqui expressed appreciation for USG assistance. Marciel urged the DND to take all steps to ensure that the killings stop and culprits face justice. Nuqui and Aragon acknowledged the seriousness of the problem and pledged that DND would do everything in its power to ensure that elements of the military were not involved, while pledging that any who were would face justice.

14. (SBU) Marciel and Pol/C met on March 2 with Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Americas Rey Carandang and outgoing U.S. Division Director Eduardo De Vega. After recognizing that the "reservoir of goodwill" between the two countries has grown with cooperative successes against terrorism, natural disasters, and planning for Avian Influenza, Marciel noted that unresolved, unlawful killings have the potential to become "a cloud in the

relationship." Carandang assured Marciel that the Philippine government took the issue very seriously and was committed to resolving this problem quickly.

15. (SBU) Comment: Director Marciel's visit was a useful opportunity to continue to convey the importance of this issue to Philippine counterparts, complementing messages delivered by other Washington and Embassy official over the past several months.

16. (U) EAP/MTS Marciel cleared this cable.

KENNEY